

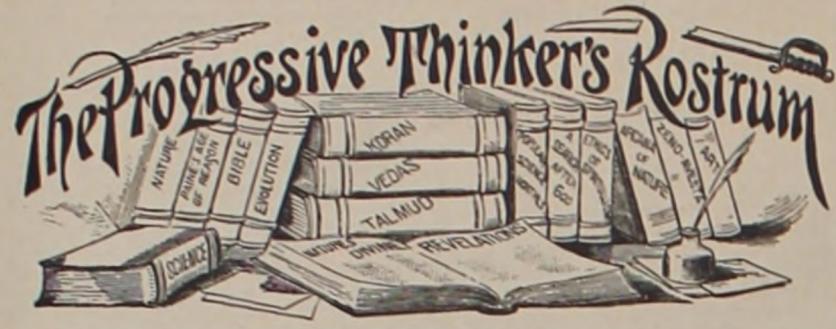
# The PROGRESSIVE THINKER

Progress, the Universal Law of Nature; Thought, the Solvent of Her Problems.

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## WHO IS YOUR GOD?

### MAN'S SEARCH FOR DIVINITY.

A Lecture Delivered by

BENJAMIN F. LEE.

Before the Mantua, Ohio, Association of Spiritualists.

Flinnancy is not argument, and in serious and profound subjects detracts from the dignity of the writer. I will premise my thoughts by saying that this question, Who is Your God? is asked in all seriousness and in a depth of candor I hope all may appreciate. As a young man, I had a profound veneration for the God of the church with which I was associated, and walked lightly and sometimes with dread while in the presence of our clergymen or the officers of the church, somehow conceiving the idea that they were in close relationship with God, an imaginary being, whom, at that time, I tried to love, but certainly feared. The silent whispers in the chamber of my soul, and the solitary talks with my own conscience, arraigned me as a criminal, and at times made me afraid of myself, although I had wronged no one.

I believed that the only God of the universe presided over our church, and that within the course of time all other sects would be gathered within our folds. Broad views, broad views these; and the result of a liberal education. I am now trying to look with charity, and perhaps with respect, upon the religious convictions of other people, however absurd or reasonable the principles and forms of worship may be upon which those religious convictions may be grounded.

To me, there is something beautiful in this pantheistic idea of Supreme Intelligence, or a Supreme Intelligence presiding over each of the arts, sciences, attributes and principles. Distributing the various qualities of mind and matter that go to make men grand and good among many gods and goddesses, so that these shall preside over the highest of these respective qualities, is certainly not autocratic, and is in the line of the tendencies of modern days; no pope, no king, but executives selected by the people for the people, embodying the highest excellencies for each position. To me it is quite as consistent as to raise the gory blade and shout, "There is no Allah but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet." Quite as consistent as for an infallible born of woman, to issue the anathema of excommunication, consigning to eternal fire the pure and great souls who are practicing enabling men to select their own gods.

Who to-day can say the Greeks were right? Who to-day can say the Greeks were wrong? Who can define a Divinity and his attributes better than Pythagoras, Socrates or Plato? Who can say whether there is one God or many Gods; whether God is male or female, personal or impersonal?

A man with a pure heart, laudable desires, and high aspirations, on bended knee, supplicated his God for the promotion of his political representative. On the other hand, a neighbor with heart just as pure, with desires as laudable, and aspirations as high, humbly before his Adorable One prays, not only that another political representative may be promoted, but that confusion may attend the efforts of his neighbor. These different parties leave their homes, go forth to business; each has a reputation unimpeachable; the doors of the bank are open to both, the highest congratulate them in the street; in fact, they meet and congratulate each other. Why this apparent harmony in commercial circles, but before their Gods, this great variance, jarring, clashing of principles? Is there need of more than one God here? No one doubts that each one prays for what he considers the best. It seems highly possible that both should be right, coexisting and extremes and antagonistic positions are much less possible. That God should, could or would answer the prayers of both, is not the God of each a being clothed with his highest conception of divine attributes? Is there anything in this to lead you to inquire, Who is your God?

Do not let any one say I am a materialist in the modern sense of that term, or the limited sense of that term, for beyond this gross matter I am sometimes permitted to see a beauty and an fulgence of an etherealized character, that glorifies the soul, and creates longing desires to become pure, charitable and wise.

Do not let any one say that I am an atheist, for I see about me on every hand the signs of intelligence, of intelligence that transcend the material and unified efforts of humanity. Nothing in man so grand but that it can find something in nature grander. Nothing so powerful in man, that in nature we find something more powerful, and this greater grandeur and greater power being outside of ourselves, when we have exhausted our own resources, how natural to reach beyond ourselves; and in this supreme moment how wise it is to know in what direction to reach, in other words, how wise it is to determine with your God!

We cannot easily wander about in the domain of thought, and sail upon a sea of beauty and pleasure, without perceiving some of the grandeur of the universe, imagining how great, how grand and how good our God must be, until we are aroused by the cold hand of reason and of the world, and the question comes, Who is your God?

Can we assume anything that will lead to definite, positive, absolute results, unless it be founded upon axiomatic principles? That an apple is greater

than any of its parts, is axiomatic; but that God is a spirit is not only not axiomatic, but we cannot define to the satisfaction of everybody what a spirit is. All know what an apple is, and all know that a piece of it is not as large as the whole of it.

The grandly inspired speaker and writer, W. J. Colville, says in his book: "It may be quite true that science tends in the direction of what may be termed, for want of a better designation, Spiritual Pantheism, but Spiritual Pantheism is the exact reverse of Materialism. Spiritual Pantheism is the glorious conception that one infinite intelligence pervades all the universe." It is not just as reasonable to say that Spiritual Pantheism is the glorious conception that many intelligences pervade the universe, and that their combined intelligence is infinite because the perfect law of harmony prevails?

Tell me, can you, who is your God?

Quality distinguishes quality. This may not be a primary postulate, but to a close observer of nature, I think it will become apparent.

The grass gathers unto itself something that will make grass; the trees gather unto itself something that will make the tree; the horse gathers unto itself something that makes the horse, and man gathers unto himself something that makes the man, and though they may try to make man from the monkey, they cannot, for a monkey cannot distinguish the qualities in nature that makes the man. Stretch a line from horizon to horizon, and erect a million or more lines perpendicular thereto, and at the base of each of these perpendiculars place the first embryo of every living animal that has come under the eye of man, and follow upon that perpendicular the growth, perfection, decline and annihilation of a certain species of each embryo; notice all the mutations caused by climate, food, environments, and the changes in many of these embryonic forms and their growths may cause many of these lines to vary from a perpendicular, we have never yet found them to so vary as to cause one line to even touch another, much less to cross and run into and with it. At the bases of these perpendiculars are found the protoplasm moner and cytot, the moner and man, and although they may have been climbing these respective perpendiculars for untold time, and reached a point about ready to scale the heights of heaven, they are still moners, cytots, monkeys and men.

That quality distinguishes quality is a fact, and the word distinguishes indicates intelligence, and how that intelligence gets there, I cannot say. The pretty rose gathers its sweet perfumes and its royal tints with an exactitude and an intelligence that surpasses man in his highest efforts.

In the wilds of Arizona, upon the rugged rocks, and upon the heated hills and plains of sand, thousands of cacti in a thousand different forms raise their various leaves and beautiful blossoms in rich and glorious colors, and though no eye beholds (beauties "Born to blush unseen and waste their sweetness on the desert air"), they quietly select their qualities of form, color and fragrance, by a rule that operates with a precision unsurpassed by any intelligence of man. Cultivation and civilization does not change their beauty, nor under these benign influences is the regularity of the selection of these qualities more certain.

The lilies of the field, how they grow; they toll not, neither do they spin; yet say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

The deduction is clear. Neither should you, my followers, toll nor spin, for God will clothe you. The birds . . .

. . . sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly father feedeth them. Ye have more value than they." So God will feed you, and you may waste your time in idleness, and in roving about the country, and when you want to ride, and can find "an ass tied and a colt with her, loose them, and bring them to me."

Born outside of wedlock, a hybrid according to Christian representation, part God, part man, an impossible cross, yet this *nullius in toto* is represented to the world as a model for imitation, an *ideal* man.

Such were the writer's reflections the other day, after an hour's pleasant conversation with a clergyman of great ability, who had just read our *RESEARCHES IN ORIENTAL HISTORY*, and who remarked,

"I admit the evidence is not very convincing that there was a real Jesus; but his character, as given us in the Gospels, is worthy of emulation. Man is so constituted that he needs something for a model, even if it is an ideal one; and Jesus is, as he is described by his biographer, a type of all that is noble in humanity. His Sermon on the Mount, even if a compilation, as you think, of Therapeutic monks, in Egypt, elevates him far above anything human of which we have knowledge. If no such character already existed, it would be desirable to set him up, even at this late day for universal guidance."

Indeed, no more worthless character has ever been presented for man's contemplation than this *ideal* hero. All the canons of the learned divine had not recently read that person, he so highly extolled, divested of the prejudices of early education. Universally observed and the world would be a lazar-house of woe. The few persons remaining in it would be eunuchs or mendicants. All the forces of nature would be left in their primal condition. Cities would not be built, states would not be organized, fields would remain uncultivated. No ships would plow the ocean. There would be no commerce, no law, no government. The wheels of industry would remain forever silent. The plow, the loom, the anvil would be unknown. Books would not be written, and man would retain his native wildness and ignorance, relying for food, raiment and shelter on his "heavenly" father who clothes the lilies and feeds the ravens."

Indeed, no more worthless character has ever been presented for man's contemplation than this *ideal* hero.

All the good things ascribed to him are at old as civilization, and can be traced back to times antedating the pretended birth of this Nazarene.

There are a few things that seem original, such as "let him who is able to endure being made a eunuch become such."

His blessings on the peacemakers are meaningless platitudes when taken in connection with his own declarations, as given in Matthew 10: 34, 35:

"I came not to send peace, but a sword.

For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

Even worse than:

"If any man comes to me and hates not his father, and mother, and wife

and son, he is not fit to be my disciple."

Father Ignatius, of the Church of England, known as the British Monk, is now preaching in Boston. He believes Jesus was God himself, was not he that the creeds represent him as God in everything; another that the God of the Jews is the Jehovah of the universe; another that Christ is God; another that there is no God and so on. Tell me why this confusion from that side of life? As Spiritualists we understand this, and believe, as a man thinks so is he, and for a while so will he be. The law of thought fixes a habit upon the soul that it transports to spirit-life. All there is of the soul, mind or spirit in spirit-life is the result of thought process on this side. As high a conception of a man had of God on the earth, just as high a conception will he have in spirit-life. There the opportunities to improve that conception, or to study the laws of nature, may be more advantageous. To me God is not a positive, fixed, or definite portion of any quality of anything that we know anything about. No man hath seen God at any time, not even his hinder parts, hence no man can define him. Each and every definition of God is wrong for him.

"If the world had followed his example, society would have ceased to exist!" Again: "If he were the utterances of a man, then they would be of the ten commandments. But this self-appointed judge, and *ideal* Jesus, regardless of legal requirements, told this adulterer arraigned before him: "Neither do I condemn thee!" John 8: 11. This action was followed in almost the next breath with: "I am the light of the world!" This law given to Moses on Mount Sinai, by God himself, amid the lightnings of Omnipotence, as religionists want us to understand, was here, practically, annulled. The offense is punished to-day, in all civilized countries, as a misdemeanor. Do the ideals approve of this action of the Master? If one law can be set aside with a wave of the hand, without any extenuating circumstances, must not all laws be set aside in the same manner? Merely, "Go and sin no more," not even exacting a promise of future good behavior? Now it is only the clergy who expect to be let off thus easily. It is just to state, so strongly does this story savor of free-loveism, many eminent Christian scholars have repudiated it as an interpolation in the "Divine Word." Even Dr. Adam Clarke, says: "I must confess the evidence in its favor does not appear

"Protestants, if the word had been correctly rendered in English.

"The first marriage feasts lasted from seven to fourteen days. The Greek term in John 2, 10, rendered "well drunk," is often used for men's intoxication. It is not probable that this stage was reached before the third day.

Dr. Clarke says: "Some have supposed the marriage feast to be the third day, [verses 1, 2], referring to the third day of the marriage feast."

In this case it seems to have been when the ordinary supply of good cheer was fully exhausted.

Mr. Talmadge, in his sermon on Damascus, on the evening of Dec. 7, 1890, said substantially of the Mohametans:

"They wash their hands before each prayer; and for 1300 years have not touched strong drink."

Such a people should be Christianized, to make a market for New England rum.

## JESUS. HIS TEACHINGS ILLUSTRATED.

### They are not Adapted to Modern Civilization.

BY G. W. BROWN, M. D., ROCKFORD, ILL.  
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"Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the son of man hath not where to lay his head." Matt. 8:20.

How came the foxes to have holes? Simply, they dug them. And the birds of the air, instead of flying over the country and telling how destitute they were, made themselves nests. If Jesus had not taught to "take no thought of the morrow," had not carried out his teachings in practice; but had gone to work like an industrious carpenter, and made himself a home, he would have had where to lay his head. It was his false notions of life, and his gross turbulence that made him so troubled, and finally brought him to the cross.

"Lay not up treasures on earth," may do for the preacher who subsists on the toil of others,

"Resist not evil," said Jesus, which the assassin, clutching his victim's throat,

children, and brethren, and sisters, yes, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple."

"Luke 14: 26.

"Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you nay; but rather division." Luke 12:5.

That is the kind of a peacemaker this *ideal* Jesus was. But it is claimed he did not mean exactly what he said. Why did he say these things, then? A perfect person, a pattern for the race, should be direct and faultless in his statements. Is he an *ideal* teacher who discourses in parables that those "seeing may not see, and hearing may not understand?" Luke 8:10.

As a prophet of evil, and a promoter of strife he was a grand success. The world has been filled with discord, violence and death ever since because of his terrible teachings. Is this the *ideal* character the world needs to improve its morals, to elevate the humble, and to fit all for a higher life?

Like a petulant, ill-bred child, when hungered, he found a fig tree barren of fruit, out of season; he cursed it, and was so virulent in his anathemas that he caused the leaves of the tree to wither in his presence, and, finally, to waste at the roots. See Matt. 21:19; Mark 11:13, 14, 21.

Common scolds were punished in a sterner age than this with the ducking stool by our English ancestors. What punishment did he deserve whose curses withered fig trees, and blasted them at the root?

Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or brethren, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive as hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."—Matt. 19:29.

A big premium, it must be conceded, as an inducement to neglect an observance of the natural instincts of humanity. Until his followers ceased to regard this bribe, the whole East was overrun by worthless Christian monks, who subsisted by beggary, and practiced their vile lust with the wandering *magdalenes*\* of that period. An *ideal* Jesus! The fewer the better.

While attending a wedding at Cana, where the wine ran short on the third day's revel, the mother of Jesus, who was present, told him of the fact. He turned to her in an insolent manner and said: "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" No doubt "our Lord's" mind was busy at the moment planning his first miracle, the changing of water into wine, using a new process, and he was impatient because of the interruption. See John 2:3, and following. Is it surprising that he was called a "wine-bibber?" Matt. 11:19. Do mothers wish their boys to copy this *ideal*? The Women's Christian Temperance Union are making a terrible ado over the malting of beer containing only about one-half as much alcohol as good wine, such as Jesus made on an occasion when drunkenness was almost universal among the guests.

A custom as old as the Jews prevailed among them, requiring persons to wash their hands before eating. It was a good sanitary measure, and more valuable because of the fact that frequently they ate from a common dish, using their fingers where we now use knives, forks and spoons. The Pharisees, who were very strict in their habits, noticed that the followers of Jesus did not observe this cleanly habit, and inquired of the master why they neglected its observance.

See Mark 7:1 to 31. Instead of replying in a gentlemanly manner, he said,

"Eisias prophesied of you hypocrites,"

and then discoursed on subjects quite foreign to the inquiry. The "Lord" himself being invited to dine with a Pharisee, neglected to follow the prevailing custom, at which the host "marveled," as well he might. Jesus responded: "Ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and platter, but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness," and then he called them "fools." See Luke 11:37 to 44, concluding with his usual expletives: "Woe unto you scribes, and Pharisees, and hypocrites," which seem to be stock terms with him on all important occasions.

Addressing the chief priest and elders

Jesus told them that publicans and harlots believed in him, and that these would enter the kingdom of Heaven in advance of them. See Matt. 21:31. This action exhibits a vain mind in an ordinary person. Is such an exhibition of personal vanity less objectionable when practiced by an *ideal* Jesus?

By having an imperfect ideal to pattern after will not the race fall very far short of its capabilities, just as the arrow aimed at some near object falls greatly short of the distance it would have reached if directed to the sun?

Jesus overthrew the tables of the money changers, poured their gold and silver on the ground, and scourged the bankers from the temple. See John 2:14, 15. Dr. Adam Clarke, commenting on the parallel passage in Matt. 21: 13, says:

"A very pious clergymen of my acquaintance, observing a woman keeping a public stand to sell nuts, gingerbread, etc., at the very porch of the church, on the Lord's day, requested her to remove. She persisted in the practice."

"Finding her still in the very entrance with her stall, he overthrew the stall, and scattered the stuff in the street."

The Doctor concludes: "He was shortly after summoned to appear before the Royal Court . . . which condemned the action, and fined the man in a considerable sum of money."

Here the *ideal* Jesus set himself up as a law-maker, assuming the role of judge, jury, witnesses and executioner, all in the same breath. Had he been guilty of a similar illegal and ill-advised act in modern times he would, probably, have received a broken head; and the verdict of any competent Court would have been: Served him right. Is morality conserved, or the world bettered for having an *ideal* disturber of the peace



# THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER.

## THE VOICES.

Written for The Progressive Thinker.

### ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

#### He Comes With Words of Warning.

They Come With no Uncertain Sound.

Julia Ann Miller, of Malden, Mass., writes: "I send The PROGRESSIVE THINKER the very best paper published in the interest of Spiritualism."

Mrs. J. A. Lee, of 182 W. Kinzie street, Chicago, Ill., writes: "I have taken your paper on the trial subscription of 10 weeks and it is so well worth it is without it. It would find a year's subscription."

Mrs. G. A. Corbin, of Angola, Ind., writes: "We are as ever pleased with THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER and I hope we shall be more so. Friends. I don't want to miss a copy of it. For the longer I take the paper the better I like it."

Mrs. J. A. Roberts, of Stevens Point, Wis., writes: "I would not be without THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER. I would rather do without 2 months else."

Dr. G. C. McGregor, of Waco, Tex., writes: "I will attempt to tell you how much I like your paper; it is not only good but we sample can't be without it. May success continue to crown your efforts to enlighten ignorant humanity."

Jeanne Armitage, of Mt. Vernon, O., writes: "I am much interested in your paper and like it very much for its progressive and sublime ideas. It is elevating and sustaining and I do not mean to do without it while I take it."

B. G. Hogenauer, of Villa Ridge, Illinois, writes: "May THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER be long lived; it is a storehouse of knowledge for the thinking and progressive mind."

Ortia Merritt, of Goshen, Ind., writes: "I am as hungry for THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER every week as I am for my dinner."

Will C. Elliott, of Greenwood, Ind., writes: "The paper will strike my judgment."

James A. Glass, of Elyria, Ohio, writes: "Like your paper better and better the more I read it."

D. E. Simon, of Hope Ranch, Cal., writes: "Your paper to do a grand work, may it continue to do a grand work."

C. Lee of Modesto, Cal., writes: "You have a noble host of writers and give us the best paper to my mind, I ever read for truth and reform."

Harriet Buxton, of Staterville, R. I., writes: "I would not miss having the paper for anything. THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER is everything to me. I have taken the paper some time and like it exceedingly."

A. C. Arnold, of Clyde, Ohio, writes: "I am as glad subscriber to your paper and like it best."

M. J. Realey, of Bridgeport, Conn., writes: "I am very well pleased to know you are to publish No. 3."

E. P. Harrington, of Milford, Mass., writes: "I have taken spiritual papers most for years and think THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER is the most progressive of any that I have taken. I would like to get 1,000 subscribers for the paper."

W. Duncan, of Council Bluffs, Iowa, writes: "It is a great joy to me to bear such glad tidings in the longing and hungering after so splendid lessons."

John Ingalls, of Cleveland, Ohio, writes: "I do not want to lose one number, for there are so many good things in each one to miss. I like it is the most instructive paper printed."

Mrs. G. H. Brooks, of Madison, Wis., writes: "I think THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER is one of the best papers published and have heard it spoken of by many in very commendable terms."

W. E. Tobe, of Little Rock, Ark., writes: "Nothing gives me more pleasure than to read your subscription. If I had the time, I believe I could get a hundred more. THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER must be doing great good. People must think more, and go slow, or our boasted 'Land of the free and home of the brave' will not be free after a while."

A. Deane, of New York City, writes: "I have become no interested in the trial numbers of your very superior paper, that their continuance has become a necessity, their contents are the most nourishing and cheapest I have ever taken of."

E. C. Leonard, of New York City, writes: "I am much pleased with your valuable paper."

W. E. Leonard, of Port Huron, Mich., writes: "Your paper is much appreciated here, and give general satisfaction to all of its readers."

Mrs. M. Sailor, of Tiffin, O., writes: "Your paper is splendid. We have taken spiritual literature for 15 years and I must say your paper is grand."

S. B. Hughes of Quaker, Mich., writes: "Your paper is giving much satisfaction and pleasure."

R. M. Farmer, of Hammonton, N. J., writes: "I like it well it seems I can do without it. It is so much consolation with all of my family on the other side."

Mrs. M. W. Howe, of San Antonio, Texas, writes: "We are greatly pleased with your paper. We are delighted and pleased with interest. May the dear All Good and angels bless and strengthen you for your work."

Mrs. C. J. Schoonmaker, of Cocoa, Florida, writes: "I have done missionary work with such number as it came."

Mrs. A. L. Van Antwerp, of Probertown, Ill., writes: "I feel I can hardly get along without THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER. It has been an eye opener to me and has taught me to use my own God-given powers of thinking for myself."

Eliza B. Chappel, of Athens, Mich., writes: "I think it impossible for me to do without the paper."

Rufus H. Bartlett, M. D., of this city, writes: "I have seen a few copies of your liberal, progressive paper, and am convinced that it will not only be interesting and instructing, but welcome in my office and home."

Mrs. C. R. Stuart, of Leominster, Mass., writes: "I am much pleased with your paper, and will use my influence to extend its circulation."

John E. Toney, of Fredonia, N. Y., writes: "It is nearly a year since you began sending THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER to my husband, M. M. Toney, and I have become so much attached to it that I should feel lost without it. It is not only in itself a progressive thinker, but is an incentive to thought, to all who read its pages. May God bless you, and may the lessons it contains be a means to supply you with temporal and spiritual means to continue in the good work which you have so efficiently and earnestly begun."

James H. Hathaway, of Kenyon, Minn., writes: "The PROGRESSIVE THINKER is looked for with much interest by myself and others here in Kenyon. My prayer is that you may be spared to make the light shine so it may penetrate the dark places of our fair land for all time."

Mrs. Jessie Chamberlain, of Spring Hill, Fla., writes: "We cannot do without your paper. I hasten to read the pages which are filled with progressive thoughts, that are so elevating to mankind."

J. A. Mills, of Trent, Mich., writes: "I will get all the subscribers I can, for the paper is good a feast for one family to enjoy alone."

Mrs. D. L. Tilton, of East Lebanon, N. H., writes: "I think it should be in every family and read by every person."

Mrs. A. L. Maynard, of Columbia, C. T., writes: "Like a true son of the soil of all of fiction's name, THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER is to my friends, bringing welcome words of cheer when by the death of a dear husband I was left to battle life's rough way alone."

J. T. Stemons, of Wellsville, Mo., writes: "THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER is large enough and good enough for all practical purposes; it is the best that I have ever taken."

Indore Plaquet of Walla Walla, Washington, writes: "Any one, no matter his creed or sect, who speaks, preaches, or acts in any way against the secular public school, ought to be considered and treated as an enemy to our constitution, and to the freedom of the human race generally."

H. B. Hill, of Lowell, Mich., writes: "The time grows so fast and knows so much that I can't recommend it as it deserves; the English language cannot express its worth. It speaks for itself."

Written for The Progressive Thinker.

### AN ENERGETIC WORKER

#### He is Now at Salt Lake.

TO THE EDITOR—I have resolved number 57 of your excellent journal, and am much pleased to make the steady impression that the public would make up and think that the public would be perfectly willing to let well enough alone and accept without murmuring a paper which is in every way worthy of the first position among the Spiritual parloricals of the world at \$1 per annum without the encumbrance, which is to come. Sure, Mr. Editor, you must intend to spoil the public child by overfeeding in giving him a \$3 meal for twenty-five cents. That is about the size of it.

I am especially pleased with the suggestion of Mr. W. H. Prindle and Wm. Chiquet, of Iowa, with reference to every State organizing a lecture bureau and engaging speakers and mediums to visit the several towns and cities in each district. This movement, in my estimation, is the most sensible and important that has ever been suggested during the seven years of my identification with Spiritualism. It has been a hobby of mine to see such a movement made, that many towns could be reached that could not be in any other way than by a State organization. There are many Spiritualists who are starving for the spiritual food that only this philosophy can produce, and who do not get the opportunity to hear a medium or a lecturer from one year's end to another, because there are not enough out and out believers in their district to warrant the appearance of a medium in their midst, save, as a matter of course, all public workers in this cause are poor in money and have to pay advances not only their car fare to from the cities, but exorbitant hotel and lodging room prices also advertising. There is no class of workers that are so shamefully imposed upon by the general public as our spiritual workers. Popular prejudice bars them from obtaining anything like a respectful hearing through the newspaper as it now is, but under a State organization these snobby editors would be compelled soon to be at least polite when they were paid to do so.

He added that now this former member of his cabinet with his strong personality, intensified by his experiences in spirit-life, was closely engaged with him in his efforts to arouse the public mind upon this all important subject. He also said that there were other officials around him in the time of the late rebellion who were in deep sympathy with the Catholic church, and in looking back to that period of his life, it seemed wonderful to him, in view of what he knew then and what has come to his knowledge since he reached spirit-life, that our national affairs came out as they did in the late struggle to preserve the union of the States.

He now sees that the Roman Catholic power in both worlds were then, and are now doing their uttermost, even while pretending to be in favor with our form of government, to have their church and its dogmas recognized in the Constitution and thus begin the destruction of our Republican form of government so dear to every true American.

Mr. Lincoln also said that the same Jesuit power brought their influence to bear upon the partially insane Giteau, who fired the fatal bullet which ended the life of President James A. Garfield, and who wrote the following significant words shortly before he took leave of earth, viz.: "Strangled for the Republic." Furthermore, he said the Surratt family of conspirators, where Wilkes Booth had his headquarters, were all Roman Catholics, and their residence was the place where their Jesuits and priests met to consult upon their plans of conspiracy.

I asked Mr. Lincoln if I should offer his statement for publication; "not at once," he said, though he wished me to write to the editor of THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER and simply say that he had given a communication on the date above mentioned with reference to his assassination, and that he would advise me when to make it public.

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On November 5th following, the startling history of Mr. Lincoln's tragic death, disclosing the details of the conspiracy leading up to the fearful deed, was published in THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER.

On December 4th following I received another communication from him, through the same channel, requesting me to publish the communication I received from him September 6, 1880, as before mentioned, referring to the closing scenes of his mortal life, which I have done as nearly as possible.

I also asked him if he corroborated the history of the crime in all essential points set forth in THE PROGRESSIVE THINKER in its issue of November 5th. This answer was in the affirmative. The general reader, he said, might ask why this opposition to Roman Catholic religion or church? We reply that we oppose no form of religion, but accord to every individual the right to choose his religious course; at the same time we are opposed to the course pursued by the powers that be of the Roman Catholic church in both worlds, who would bring the Constitution and our Republican form of government under subjection to the powerful organization of that church, which would be the death blow to liberty, while mental slavery would reign supreme. He would call special attention to the words of Cardinal Gibbons, who spoke of the Constitution as the "greatest of all earthly possessions." Perhaps nothing more absurd was ever put forward as argument, and that it should be written by the leader of a great movement, by a representative woman, makes one lose faith even in the cause of woman! If she would glance into the daily papers she would see the advertisement of fakirs who claim to have prophetic ken because they are seven sons of seven sons! She will accept such credentials for nature? Is partial to seven? But what of the trinity; the three? There must be a mistake. God must be seven as the seven heavens, and the seven seas and seven vials of wrath all correspond, and seven done as nearly as possible.

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## PSYCHIC FACTS.

## AN INTERESTING CHAPTER.

## Something For Spiritualists to Consider.

## The Views of an Eminent Lawyer.

WELLS vs. BUNDY.

STATUS OF PSYCHIC FACTS IN COURTS OF LAW. ADMISSIBILITY OF EVIDENCE. LAW OF LIBEL. NEW YORK, SUPREME COURT, PART IV, CITY AND COUNTY OF NEW YORK, BEFORE BRANCH J. J. WELLS & BUNDY. — ACTION FOR LIBEL; DAMAGES CLAIMED, \$20,000.

This case presents certain novel questions that have not yet received an authoritative adjudication.

Mrs. Wells, the plaintiff, is what is usually known as a "materializing medium." The defendant is the editor and publisher of a Chicago newspaper entitled *The Religion-Philosophical Journal*, in which appeared the words complained of, to wit: "If necessary, we can prove in the courts of New York City that Mrs. Wells is a vile swindler, and has been for years using trick cabinets and confederates."

Defendant pleaded the truth in justification. The question I propose to discuss is whether, by the rulings of the court, the plaintiff was deprived of any right secured to her by the law of the land, and shall lay out of the case all the questions touching either the truth of defendant's charge or the reality of the so-called "spirit phenomena" they having no bearing on the legal issues involved.

To interrogatories propounded to the jury by plaintiff's counsel, they all replied, in substance, that they would not believe in the occurrence of certain extraordinary facts, such as are alleged to occur at "spirit seances," though testified by unimpeachable witnesses; and two of them added that even should such facts be conceded by the other side, they would still refuse to believe them.

Plaintiff's counsel then stated that they were prepared to prove the occurrence of such facts by credible witnesses, and that evidence of them would be material to her case. But the judge ruled such evidence to be irrelevant to the issue, declaring that he would exclude it if offered, and overruled plaintiff's objections to the jury. Thereupon, plaintiff's counsel declining to proceed, on defendant's motion the suit was dismissed with costs.

The question of the *status* in court of this class of facts came up some years ago in London. The medium, Slade, who professed to obtain direct spirit writings between two states independently of agency on his part, was prosecuted before a magistrate under a statute of George II, for the punishment of fortune tellers and other pretenders of a similar sort. The prosecuting witness was Professor Lankester, F. S. R. There was no direct evidence of fraud, but Prof. Lankester swore that on one occasion Slade had taken a slate on which no writing was visible, and after holding it for a few moments under his table, it was found to be covered with writing. The witness having stated that it was physically impossible for the writing to have been done during the short time the slate was out of sight, the magistrate adjudged that it must have been done beforehand, and so convicted Slade of fraud under the act.

In this case the magistrate had admitted the testimony of a number of witnesses of unquestionable character, including one or more eminent scientists, to the effect that they had witnessed similar results at sittings with Slade under conditions that rendered fraud simply impossible. But the magistrate felt himself bound, he said, to disregard this testimony, however respectable, "as contrary to established law of nature."

The meaning of the proposition here laid down obviously is that courts of law may pronounce judicially what facts are, and what facts are not "contrary to the established laws of nature," and that such facts occur inexplicable under any known law, they would have no *status in causa*.

The case at bar presents two important questions which must sooner or later come up for adjudication by our highest courts. One of them is: May a court of law reject evidence of any class of facts on the ground of their supposed inexplicability?

Considering the infinite variety of supposed cases, this question might lead to a very wide discussion, with little hope of arriving at any general and indubitable principle. It will be sufficient for the present purpose to limit the inquiry to the particular class of cases of which Wells & Bundy is the type in other words, to cases where certain apparently inexplicable phenomena are charged as having been produced by the conduct of others." And again: "The tests we apply in jurisprudence are the tests we apply in historical and social criticism." And again: "Where the question at issue is fraud, peculiar latitude in the reception of facts, both inculpatory and exculpatory, is allowed."

The general principle clearly is that any fact whatever is admissible in evidence if it may appear to the common sense of the jury to throw light upon any material fact at issue in the case. And in the class of cases we are now considering there is a special reason for the application of this principle. The defense of a party charged with fraudulently producing certain manifestations comes into court weighted down by the extraordinary and *prima facie* incredible nature of such manifestations; appearing on their face so improbable as to raise an overwhelming presumption that they could not have occurred independently of the party's agency. To meet this seemingly conclusive presumption, our only purpose here is to show that, for all his biographers claimed for him, instead of offering himself as a voluntary sacrifice for the sins of the world, he was aspiring to get up a revolution, and throw off the Roman yoke. His ridiculous claims, sustained by the lowly rabble, brought him to the cross, an ending he greatly deplored, and from which he desired to free himself. How then, in answer to God for the sins of the world? How a martyr to religion in any form? How an ideal character, world of eminence? How harmonies, the forces to get up a revolt against the government with the claim that all his acts were of a pacific nature, looking only to the establishment of a reformed and pure religion?

United States v. REID.—Since the case of Wells & Bundy, the admissibility of psychic facts in evidence has again been passed upon; this time by the U. S. Circuit Court sitting at Grand Rapids, Michigan. The defendant was presented in the U. S. District Court (Stevens, J., presiding) for using the mails for fraudulent purposes by sending an advertisement in which he charged in the indictment that he falsely and fraudulently pretended that he could obtain the testimony from the spirit-world.

At this outset we must carefully distinguish the bare facts themselves from any of the various theories claiming to explain them, such as agency of departed spirits, "psychic force," or some hitherto unknown law of nature. So far as appears, Mrs. Wells did not seek to rest her case on the theory that the phenomena in question were produced by departed spirits; and neither was it necessary for her to do so. All she claimed was the right to prove facts tending to show that the manifestations given in evidence against her may have occurred independently of any conscious agency on her part.

As to the impossible, can we safely pronounce any psychical phenomenon impossible as "contrary to the laws of nature" until we have learned what those laws are? Do not the "impossibilities" of one generation often become matters of common knowledge in the next? Because an alleged fact is inexplicable under any known law, must it be rejected in the face of unimpeachable testimony that it really occurred, when such facts have been and still are occurring all around us? The fall of Newton's apple was such a fact. All that Newton did was to range it under a more general fact, that of gravitation. But to this day, who has ever explained the fact of gravitation? On this point *experto cride* being the legal maxim, I may properly cite the publicly declared opinion of Arago, one of the greatest of physical philosophers: "He is a bold man who, outside of pure mathematics, will pronounce anything to be impossible."

Again: The denial *a priori* of facts of a natural kind, however, which shut out all evidence of the operation of natural forces before unknown. Less than a century old is the discovery that water is simply a chemical compound of two invisible gases, which an electric current will disintegrate and set free. Those who undertake to define *a priori* the limits of the possible should, to be consistent, reject all testimony to this apparently impossible fact.

Suppose the properties of the

constitution. Professor Carpenter objects to the jury on the ground that he is able to prove by unimpeachable testimony that various times these extraneous facts did occur when collusion was impossible, and that this evidence was material to his case. The judge overrules his objection to the jury on the ground that such an extraneous fact as "impossible" and facts not coming within the case to be tried." And thereupon, the plaintiff is dismissed, and the case is dismissed, and this *mirabile mundi* is precisely the history of the trial in Wells & Bundy.

To more fully illustrate the principle I am contending for, let us suppose another case, entirely dissimilar. In its circumstances to that of Professor Carpenter. John Stiles, an artist, arrives, a stranger, in New York City. He advertises a picture bearing his signature as a specimen of his talent and competency to teach. The merits of the picture are such as secure him the name "painter."

The editor of a city newspaper publishes as follows: "If necessary, we can prove in the courts of New York City that John Stiles is a vile swindler, and has been for years using trick cabinets and confederates."

Defendant pleaded the truth in justification. The question I propose to discuss is whether, by the rulings of the court, the plaintiff was deprived of any right secured to her by the law of the land, and shall lay out of the case all the questions touching either the truth of defendant's charge or the reality of the so-called "spirit phenomena" they having no bearing on the legal issues involved.

To interrogatories propounded to the jury by plaintiff's counsel, they all

replied, in substance, that the plaintiff's evidence was admissible in court of the mysterious phenomena of magnetic attraction. On the theory that the judge presiding may decide *a priori* what facts are possible, the defendant is entitled to be justified in rejecting all evidence of these phenomena on the ground of their being obviously contrary to the law of gravitation. The discovery of the properties of the magnet was the discovery of a natural force before unknown; a force capable of suspending the established law of gravitation. Now, where is the man entitled to announce *ex cathedra* that hereafter no other natural force capable of suspending a law of nature will ever be discovered? And should a suit in court claim that such a natural force has been lately discovered, and that the fact of its existence is material to his case, would it be within the legitimate scope of judicial authority to exclude the testimony offered to prove it?

Nothing that has been said thus far is in criticism of the judge's action in Wells & Bundy; since the report of the case does not show that he intended to exclude the plaintiff on the ground of the facts to be testified to being impossible. The sole ground stated by him was, substantially, that defendant's answer alleged the use by the plaintiff of confederates and trick cabinets, and that the facts offered by the plaintiff in evidence did not come within the issue to be tried. But what was that issue, if not this: Were the manifestations in question produced by trick, as alleged by defendant, or by some power independent of any agency of the medium, as alleged by the plaintiff? Could the judge mean that after defendant had adduced his evidence of trick, the plaintiff could not be permitted to meet it by showing that in what occurred she might have had no conscious agency? It would be unjust to attribute any such meaning to a judge of common intelligence. I shall therefore assume that his ruling, as given, went no further than this: That, if defendant should succeed in proving plaintiff's fraud on one or more occasions, his justification would be substantially made out, whether or not, on other occasions, the manifestations had been genuine; and that therefore what may have taken place on these other occasions was irrelevant to that issue.

And this brings us to the other important question arising out of the case. But before stating it, let me refer to a well established principle in the law of libel, which is this: In a civil action for a libel charging the plaintiff with crime, the truth being pleaded in justification, the justification must be made out by the same evidence that it would be necessary to convict the plaintiff on or more occasions. His justification would be substantially made out, whether or not, on other occasions, the manifestations had been genuine; and that therefore what may have taken place on these other occasions was irrelevant to that issue.

Now, the question is, not what weight the jury might give to this testimony that would of course depend upon all the evidence in the case taken together, but simply whether, if believed, it would not naturally and reasonably operate to cast some doubt, at least, over the defendant's evidence, and even, if there were suspicious circumstances about it, to overthrow it altogether. And if the true answer to this question is in the affirmative, the evidence offered by the plaintiff in Wells & Bundy was clearly admissible under the rules I have cited from Wharton's Criminal Evidence.

As to the judge's overruling plaintiff's objections to the jury he was right in so doing if the evidence offered was legally admissible otherwise. He was wrong if a juror who has been and exposed to an opinion is incompetent: *a fortiori*, if he declares that no evidence would cause him to change it. In C. R. Austin, a juror was excluded whose opinion was adverse to the constitutionality of the law under which the defendant was indicted, on the ground that even were the defendant conclusively proved guilty, he would vote to acquit. Now, in this case of Wells & Bundy, that jury would have felt bound to convict on proof of the manifestations alone, *without the shadow of any evidence of fraud*; and in spite of their oath to "a true verdict according to the law and the evidence." Obviously, under these circumstances, plaintiff's counsel were compelled, in duty to their client, to decline to proceed with the trial.

Another question as to the law of libel is suggested, not by the case of Wells & Bundy itself, but by an incident growing out of it. After the dismissal of the defendant, Bundy published a pamphlet purporting to be a report of the trial, and for a considerable time advertised it for sale in his journal *Extraordinary*.

Plaintiff's case championed by J. Newson, "can be had in December 3d, 1890, in a court of Plaintiff's selection. With a jury in the box, the Judge on the bench and the Defendant present, ready and anxious to keep his word. Mr. Newson backs down and refuses to allow the case to go to trial, which course is considered by able lawyers as

impermissible for the prosecution to give to the jury on the ground that he is able to prove by unimpeachable testimony that the defendant's mere claim that he could do what, in the opinion of the court, is impossible, was *prima facie* evidence of fraud; that the question whether what the defendant claimed to do is impossible would not be submitted to the jury, as it is a matter of fact, and the court, who would decide *a priori* what facts are possible, is not entitled to do so.

Searches the pages of history from the first moment of recorded time, and where do we find a character exceeding this idea in vulgar detraction and abuse of his superiors, and in ignoring all the great needs of the race? No, no, an ideal man is needed to this end, a practical foreman of the miseries of the damned!

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